

## MEETING SUMMARY

### REGIONAL LAW, SAFETY AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (RLSJC)

Thursday, July 31, 2014

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Bertha Knight Landes Room, Seattle City Hall

### Theme: Youth Agenda

This meeting provided an overview of the Juvenile Justice System and included presentations from Superior Court, Raising Our Youth as Leaders (ROYAL), Bellevue School District, and an update on the King County Children and Family Justice Center.

### Juvenile Court Programs Overview

*Judge Wesley Saint Clair, King County Superior Court*

Judge Saint Clair discussed juvenile crime statistics, current evidence-based programs, new and promising strategies, and disproportionality in the juvenile criminal justice system.

Juvenile filings in King County declined 78% between 1998 and 2013, mirroring similar national declines. There were 1,745 cases filed on in 2013 compared to almost 8,000 in 1998. The detention population had a similar decline, with the population dropping from 187 in 1998 to 58 in 2013.

Though some of this decline is unexplained, evidence-based programs play a role. King County has been recognized as an early implementer of Juvenile Drug Court and employs other evidence-based programs. These include:

- ART – Aggression Replacement Training
- FFT – Functional Family Therapy
- MST – Multi-Systemic Therapy
- FIT – Family Integrated Transition
- PYCS – Parent Youth Connections Seminar

King County is also using a wide range of new and promising strategies to improve outcomes for youth and families. These include:

- EET – Education & Employment Training
- Mentoring
- Wraparound Services
- CSEC – Commercially Sexually Exploited Child Taskforce
- DVAC – Domestic Violence Alternative Center
- Restorative Justice
- Creative Alternatives (arts-based alternative to detention)
- Reallocating diversion resources
- ASD - Alternatives to Secure Detention (expansion and improvement)
- Community outreach through Juvenile Justice 101

- SKCCGC - Suburban King County Coordinating Council on Gangs

Judge Saint Clair explained the science, which clearly shows that applying adult penalties to youth is inappropriate and ineffective. Adolescent brains differ from adult brains; physical and hormonal differences mean youth do not have full capacity for decision-making. Adverse childhood experiences, bullying, substance abuse, and other challenges compound these limitations. Evidence-based approaches recognize and address these outside circumstances and conditions that lead to juvenile crime.

While King County's Juvenile Court has received praise for its work in juvenile justice, Judge Saint Clair sees remaining blemishes and significant work to be done. As overall populations have declined, youth of color remain overrepresented at nearly every stage of the juvenile court process. Efforts to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in King County have evolved over time and currently include:

- Objective decision-making tools (Detention Intake Criteria, Detention Risk Assessment Instruction)
- Warrant reduction efforts
- Youth employment programs
- Culturally specific mental health and chemical dependency professionals on Juvenile Justice Assessment Team (JJAT)

Future plans include improved data collection and reporting and partnering with community organizations in new ways to prevent juvenile justice involvement and reduce DMC. A key aspect of this work is keeping kids in school.

Judge Saint Clair answered questions about the "school to prison" pipeline and Truancy Court. The evidence shows that detention is not an effective means to achieve school attendance. Judge Saint Clair mentioned Clark County as an example of a jurisdiction where students are referred to Community Truancy Boards instead of courts.

## **Raising Our Youth as Leaders (ROYAL) Project**

*Debra Baker, Project Director, ROYAL Project*

Debra Baker provided a presentation on the ROYAL Project, which is housed within the King County Department of Public Defense and collaborates with community based agencies. The ROYAL Project serves juvenile justice involved youth, with an emphasis on youth of color. Evaluations have shown that 75% of youth participants do not reoffend as juveniles and 72% avoid the adult criminal justice system. Participants report improvements in school attendance, emotional health, and say the program gave them tools to become productive members of society.

Ms. Baker described ROYAL's wrap-around services, which are led by a case strategist and a life coach. The program is based on 10 pillars that cover the needs of participants:

- Spirituality
- Recreation
- Organization
- Culture

- Education
- The Mind
- Relationship
- Community Investment
- Economics
- Health

Ms. Baker shared success stories of youth who completed the program and went on to employment and college. The program is connected to My Brother's Keeper, the President's program to address the persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color.

Ms. Baker also introduced ROYAL's new Raising Our Youth as Leaders Learning Academy, which will begin operation in fall 2015. The program will be hosted by Highline College and Antioch University and will provide youth with a broader perspective of education. A future phase – "Mind Your Business – Managing your life as a business," will use business principles to teach youth life skills.

In the question and answer session, Ms. Baker explained capacity limitations of the program, which currently serves 60 unduplicated youth, and described partnerships with Teen Child and Puget Sound Education Initiative at Garfield High.

## School System Efforts

*Dr. Justin (Tim) Mills, Superintendent, Bellevue School District*

Dr. Mills presented on Bellevue School District's current practices and goals for the future. By 2018, the district aims for 100% of students to graduate career- or college-ready. The district also expects all graduates will have 20 college credits by graduation and a clear sense of a role in their communities.

Bellevue has undergone a massive demographic change in recent years; 54% of current students are from diverse backgrounds and 1 in 5 come from low-income households. Dr. Mills explained Bellevue School District's approach to successfully meet the challenges of changing demographics. Pacific Education Group, which encourages addressing racial issues directly to better understanding cultural context and reach racial equity, provided assistance. The District has equity teams in every school and a focus on preschool that allows for early intervention. While Bellevue School District covers an area of disparate economic conditions, school curriculums and buildings are consistent throughout the district.

The district recently hired Shomari Jones to lead efforts to reconnect with youth at risk of dropping out of school. The district uses the evidence-based RULER curriculum, which includes teachings on emotional intelligence. Because Bellevue's efforts acknowledge that children may not come from environments where school-appropriate behavior is taught, behavior is included as part of the curriculum. The district aims to reduce suspensions and does not want to reduce access to education due to behavior problems. Educational services are provided to students in out of school suspension. The district works actively to mitigate racial disproportionality in discipline by recognizing patterns and ensuring that responses to behavior are consistent.

Dr. Mills reported that meetings with 120 community members, including the city council, provide evidence that Bellevue understands the importance of education. The city provides part of the funding for School Resource Officers. Community partner organizations include Youth Link and Jubilee Reach.

In the question and answer session, Dr. Mills described efforts to share Bellevue's techniques with other school districts and Parent Academy, a program primarily for diverse background parents that is currently in the design phase.

## **Children and Family Justice Center Update**

*Jim Burt and Carolyn Duncan, King County Facilities Management*

Jim Burt and Carolyn Duncan provided background information and an update on the Children and Family Justice Center (CFJC). The project replaces the three buildings of the current King County Youth Services Center (YSC), which date from 1952 to 1991 and do not meet current needs. Preliminary project planning began in 2006 with Superior Court's concept of a unified Juvenile and Family Court. Funding for the new structure comes from a 2012 levy.

The facility will include 10 courtrooms, a detention center with 154 dorms and transitional living units for non-detention use. The design will be flexible to allow for future expansion. The smaller detention facility reflects efforts to minimize juvenile detention. The building design as a whole will provide on-site linkages to community based services and private spaces to allow for family and legal discussions. In addition to providing the best service to children and families in the juvenile justice system, the project aims to support neighborhood plans through private development (2.7 acres), improved accessibility, and open area accessible to the community (1.6 acres). The new facility will improve services while saving \$1.5 million annually in staffing and operations for 30 years.

Mr. Burt and Ms. Duncan explained the County's use of the design-build process, which is a two-stage selection process that results in a single contract for both design and construction. The process reduces overall risk by increasing cost certainty and designating a single source of accountability for both design and construction. Mr. Burt and Ms. Duncan also reviewed the project timeline; construction is planned to start in 2016.

The new facility will integrate neighborhood concerns and maximize development opportunities. Community outreach and opportunities for input have been included since the very beginning of the project and have included Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings, public open houses, and newsletters.